Labour Monthly

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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A YEAR OF LABOUR GOVERNMENT *by William Gallacher, M.P.*

INDEPENDENCE FOR INDIA? *by R. Palme Dutt*

FOOD AND FOREIGN POLICY *by R. Page Arnot*

THE SECOND PARIS CONFERENCE *by Quaestor*

WORLD TRADE UNIONISM SETS TO WORK *by Clemens Dutt*

August, 1946

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CONTENTS

August, 1946

	Page
Notes of the Month—*Food and Foreign Policy* by R. PAGE ARNOT	229
A Year of Labour Government by WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.	235
The Second Paris Conference by QUAESTOR	239
Independence for India? by R. PALME DUTT	245
World Trade Unionism Sets to Work by CLEMENS DUTT	249
Prospects in the U.S.A. by IVOR MONTAGU	252
Book Reviews	
The Causes of the German Catastrophe by J. WINTERNITZ	257
Greetings to the U.S.A.	260

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

BREAD rationing in the United Kingdom began on July 21. It was a hard decision to be thrust upon any government; but had to be made, because of the world shortage of food. Yet what would have been cheerfully borne in wartime came as a shock at the end of the first year of peace.

The Tories were quick to take advantage of the situation: their millionaire newspapers stirred up the discontent; the "Housewives League" was started; some of the most unsavoury characters began to appear again in public; and finally the English Master Bakers' Association began to make propaganda. The English Master Bakers, free throughout wartime from the type of difficulty borne by the grocers or the butchers, held conferences and mass meetings, and (after the cloven hoof was revealed by the proposed alternative that "the price of bread should be doubled") passed a resolution that they would not work the rationing scheme. This readiness of these manufacturers to resort to sabotage was hastily deprecated by their original grand fugleman, Churchill, in the parliamentary debate of July 18; but remained as an interesting example that the much-advertised affection for "the reign of law" is only skin-deep. What would have happened if trade unions whose members had to make so many sacrifices in war-time had met a similar request from the Government by a blank refusal to co-operate?

"Controls Off"?

The Tory pack, whose howl against bread rationing came as a culmination to their year's campaign for putting an end to controls, were in full cry when in the same month of July their paradise of "All Controls Off" was made visible in the United States of America. There the Congress, with its overwhelming capitalist majority, destroyed the price controls. Immediately the price of foodstuffs and practically every article of consumption leaped upwards. So startling was the object lesson that the millionaire press in Britain had hastily to endeavour to reassure its readers by printing despatches showing that the new daily higher price levels in the U.S.A. were still below the top prices of the old black market. No doubt this would reassure those rich persons who have been finding the black market charges rather stiff. But to the mass of people, the American abolition of controls meant that instead of a black market the black injustice of unfettered capitalist distribution was clearly revealed.

Who Was to Blame?

Nevertheless, the difficulties of bread rationing, together with virulence of the Tory campaign influencing backward sections of the population, had a definite effect. This wave of unpopularity should be a warning. It followed hard after Bournemouth; there the success of the advocates of disunity over those who moved for Communist affiliation went to their heads to such an extent that the urgent question of the people's food was never discussed. But, over a longer period, it must be said that the Labour Government largely brought this unpopularity upon itself. By ascribing the world shortage solely to "natural agencies," to causes outside human control, they concealed the responsibility of the human agencies. Putting the blame solely on providence (a good enough excuse in the Middle Ages) no longer suffices at the present day. Such an explanation was bound to recoil upon its authors; and the Labour Government was held to blame for much that was the responsibility of its predecessors or of governments in other coun-

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tries. These basic responsibilities for world food shortage (and the names and addresses of those to blame) for six months were not divulged by Bevin or the other members of the Government, when they kept repeating their unconvincing formula about no one being to blame and about it all being due to non-human agencies.

Sauce for the Goose

In his explanation on July 3 of the decision to ration bread, the Food Minister said, correctly enough, that the Labour Government dare not gamble on conditions in the U.S.A., on the home harvest (with British weather) or on "the weather on the Canadian prairies." Again, on July 18, he said:—

> The main purpose of the scheme is to provide an insurance policy against the various uncertain factors which beset us during the period in which our stocks would be at a dangerously low level.

Precisely the same reasoning must apply to the action of governments in previous years, in 1943, in 1944 and the first part of 1945. During these months and years world stocks built up in the earlier part of the war were dropping rapidly—from 45 million tons in 1943, to 31 million tons in 1944, to 22 million tons in 1945. The position of the world stocks was well-known to the governments: at the Hot Springs Conference of the United Nations in July, 1943, the whole problem of world feeding, both short-term and long-term, was surveyed. But the risk which the Labour Government dared not take today as regards this island was callously incurred then. The Governments of the unoccupied countries took the risk of world famine. They took no sufficient measures to prevent it. They did not reassure the farmers by a long-term guarantee of corn prices. They allowed the risk to become greater and greater, from 1943 onwards. The world's cupboard was getting bare and nobody cared. It was the duty of the governments of the food-importing countries (and especially the Coalition Government in this island) to look ahead and to urge their allies overseas to make provision in good time. Finally, it was the duty of all to allow for droughts and for the terrible effects of war. But they chose to gamble on the chance that there would be good harvests and that droughts would not occur in the first year after war. Droughts did occur, proclaiming the bankruptcy of the human agencies which could have insured "against the various uncertain factors" and neglected to do so.

A Brace of Tories

Who was the Food Minister in the United Kingdom during the crucial period of 1943 to 1945? It was the Tory —John Jestyn Llewellin. Today his name is never mentioned. He sits happily aloft as Lord Llewellin in the House of Peers. His responsibility is forgotten. Why? Because he was a Coalition Minister, and because Labour, as part of the Coalition, bears constitutional responsibility for all that Government did or failed to do? These considerations may seal the lips of a rabid constitutionalist like Herbert Morrison. Is the labour movement expected to be similarly gagged?

"Hudson's Folly!"

Who was Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries from 1940 to 1945? Mr. Robert Hudson, whose effrontery in the bread rationing debate of July 3 was so challenged in Parliament as to force a withdrawal. It was he who in the autumn of 1944 and in the early months of 1945 decided to reduce the wheat acreage in Britain, and by this action thoroughly deserved the taunt ("I suggest that the first rationed loaf be named 'Hudson's Folly' ") made by Mrs. Jean Mann, M.P.

Again, it was a mistake of the Coalition Government. Again the lips of Labour Ministers are sealed: or,

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opened only, as in the Prime Minister's speech, to give a gratuitous defence of the Coalition's folly:—

It was quite reasonable for the Coalition Government to decide that we could allow our own wheat production to fall from its war-time peak. (C. R. Attlee, House of Commons, April 4, 1946).

Here, no doubt, the failure of the Labour Government last autumn to reverse the Hudson policy prompted this defence, rather than the necessary admission that Hudson and the Coalition had been in the wrong, and the Communists had been in the right. For, in point of fact, at the General Election the only party which had the foresight to demand the reversal of the Hudson policy and the extension of wheat acreage was the Communist Party. Had the Communist policy been followed then there need not have been bread rationing now.

U.S.A. Responsibility

But the food-importing countries like Britain bear only one part of the total responsibility for the famine. It was in the exporting countries and particularly the United States that the great food stocks of 1945 were rapidly eaten away. Here not only the banking and milling interests that ran the "farm lobby" and sought to burst the Roosevelt price ceilings, but also the legislators of the United States are responsible. The sordid dealings of monopoly capital were carried on at the expense of the lives of millions who will die of famine. When the Republican Party boss, ex-President Hoover, refused to speak against the removal of price ceilings on meat and eggs (by which removal still more grain will be diverted to animal feeding) even the Liberal *Nation* of New York commented:—

Like the majority of Congress, the 'Great Humanitarian' appears to be playing politics with the standard of living of the American people and the empty stomachs of the world at large. (29/6/46)

Lips Sealed by Foreign Policy

What public criticism of this attitude, what clear explanation of this cause of world famine operating over more than three years, has been uttered by Labour ministers? The millionaire newspapers did not avail themselves of "the freedom of the press" to declare the danger or the cause of the danger. All were singularly silent about the policies of American monopoly capital and of the American administration and Congress, so that as yet the British people have hardly begun to realise why the great cereal stocks of 1943 were frittered away, and what human agencies were responsible. Again, their lips were sealed. But this time the lips were sealed by foreign policy. A realisation of this, however tardy, may bring trade unionists and co-operators to realise that foreign policy is indissolubly linked with home policy; and that if cupboards are bare or unemployment is spreading, they must be prepared to subject Mr. Bevin's foreign policy to the same ruthless criticism as they would level at any minister who adopted an open Tory policy on this or that sector of home affairs.

Two Sides of Foreign Policy

For twelve months now a foreign policy has been adopted, which requires table-thumping and "tough attitudes" towards the U.S.S.R., but deferential silence towards the U.S.A. Differences are bound to arise between the three chief powers. To have them openly expressed and discussed is one method, to keep diplomatic secrecy is another. But to express them in the case of one power and to suppress them in the case of the other power is the surest way to break up that Three Power Unity which inflicted a military defeat on fascism and gave the only basis for the building of lasting peace. The differences about food, about the risk to Britain's "pipeline" and the peril of starvation in India ought to

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have been freely and publicly expressed. Such a policy, so far from increasing the difficulty, as the timorous think, would have been the surest way to reach an understanding with the American people and to overcome the world food shortage more speedily than is now possible. Nor would it have endangered the loan.

The Loan

On July 13 the United States loan to the British Government of under a thousand million pounds was passed by the House of Representatives. It had taken five months' negotiations last year with the U.S. administration in Washington. Brought back by Lord Keynes, it passed through Parliament within six days. It took another six months to pass through the United States Senate and House of Representatives. During all this time loan prospects exercised a pressure on the British Government. But if any think that the loan, with all the conditions attached, was the sole determinant of British foreign policy, or that Mr. Bevin's diplomatic attitude was simply that of an inpecunious person bowing with ingratiating smiles towards the pawnbroker, they are very much mistaken.

The first speech of Mr. Bevin setting forth the main lines of the foreign policy he has since pursued was made before the loan negotiations were under way. No partisan of the Anglo-American bloc would base this foreign policy simply on the loan, though they might use the loan negotiations to stifle criticism. The Anglo-American bloc is not subservient to the Loan: the Loan itself subserves the purposes of the Anglo-American bloc.

The Loan as Instrument

From the side of the United States the purpose of the Loan is clearly stated. It is the instrument of United States policy. It is dictated by American capitalist interests. On this Mr. Raeburn, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, was quite candid:

> If we are not allied to British democracy, I fear somebody else may be—and then God help us. World leadership is offered to us today, if we take it.

And lest any doubt should be left as to the anti-Soviet motives of the majority (the minority being anti-British as well as anti-Soviet and believing that the strength of American imperialism was all-sufficient without any link with Britain) another supporter (Jesse Wolcott of the House Banking and Currency Committee) with even greater candour said:—

> In our actions today we will determine for years to come whether there will be a coalition between British and American spheres of influence or a coalition between British and Soviet spheres.

After this there can be no question that the loan (necessary for the British people if they were to avoid a greater austerity than now exists) will be regarded by the American lender not simply as a profitable investment in export markets but as an instrument, as a screw to keep British policy in conformity with the demands of American capitalism. During the next months (for the Loan is not given all at once) there will be many opportunities to observe the turn of the screw.

The Gendarme of Europe ?

If from the British side also the Loan was not a determinant of foreign policy, then the question still has to be answered, why Mr. Bevin is so "tough" with Russia and so yielding with the United States, why the new democracies now express their belief that Britain is hostile to them and why the reactionaries of every country (not only in Greece and Spain) look to Britain as the new "gendarme of Europe." Or, to put it round the other way, why should we not have had such a policy of friendship with the new democracies as would have brought from the grain-exporting countries of

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Europe a guarantee of help from their 1947 harvests?

Policies in the Abstract

There is no such question to be answered about the other two chief powers. Both in the case of the U.S.A. and of the U.S.S.R. practice is reasonably close to what might be expected to be their foreign policies in the abstract. A socialist state of workers and peasants, with a corresponding government, and having to safeguard its security against a recurrence of aggression, will have one type of policy: and the concrete application of this so far has been seen in the series of war-time agreements from Teheran onwards and in the Conferences of the Foreign Secretaries, as well as in the meetings of the United Nations.

A capitalist society, on the other hand, like the U.S.A. with its capitalist machinery of state run by one or other of its alternative capitalist parties, will have an entirely different type of policy —imperialist and expansionist. The concrete application is seen so far in the U.S. naval or air-bases thousands of miles from its shores, in the occupation of parts of China (in which they did no fighting) by United States troops, in an increased use of its overwhelming resources to extort political concessions in return for loans, in a State Department largely influenced by the oil trusts and armanent combines, in an insistence on the "open door" in trade and on the methods of "free enterprize"—and, finally, in atom bomb diplomacy.

The Queer Case of Britain

But Britain is in a peculiar case. Here we have on the one hand a capitalist society, on the other a Labour Government chosen by a huge electoral majority. In the abstract, it might seem that this peculiar situation would be reflected in Britain's international relations. Yet whatever internal changes may be made, there is no significant change in foreign policy and no change whatever in the agents through whom foreign affairs were conducted ever since Munich and the Hoare-Laval pact of 1935. The only change seems to be in the standpoint of Labour ministers on particular questions where they were opposed to the old policy which they now carry out. For example, on Palestine the Labour Party conferences were committed up to the hilt to support of Zionism: for twelve months the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine have been given provocation after provocation not only by a failure to carry out these pledges, but by reversion to the old policy—with the present lamentable results. The needs of British imperialism, not the mistaken declarations of Labour Party conferences, dominate the situation in Palestine. The needs of British imperialism—and not the pledges of Labour leaders—dominate the whole of foreign policy. When Mr. Bevin speaks of "British interests" on the Danube, it means the interests of British capitalists, not British trade unionists and co-operators. When Mr. Bevin speaks of "cutting across the throat of the British Empire" at Tripoli, it means that the monopoly capitalists of this country require the Mediterranean Sea henceforth to be an undisputed British sphere of influence. It is only within this framework of subserving the traditional (capitalist) interests of Britain that the Labour Government operates its foreign policy: and appears therefore to be continuing a Tory policy, since that too was conducted within the same framework.

Tory Policy?

Actually there have been up till now three distinct strands in Tory foreign policy. There is the Western Bloc (or old Munichite) policy represented primarily by the Chamberlain grouping, the Anglo-American bloc vociferously advocated by the Churchill section; and the isolationist Empire preference

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policy of Beaverbrook and his anti-Loan followers. On the other hand, the Labour Party's foreign policy as set forth in the 1944 Report of the Executive Committee on "The International Post - War Settlement" bravely claimed:—

> Our first aim, therefore, must be to continue the closest possible Anglo-American-Russian co-operation. If we three hold together, all will be well; if we fall apart, all will be dark and uncertain. With the U.S.S.R. we have already concluded the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance, which binds our two Governments and peoples together, as partners in a common quest for peace, security and economic progress, for the next twenty years. With the U.S.A. we have, as yet, no such formal bond of partnership; but we must do our best to foster, by all practicable means, Anglo-American understanding and joint endeavour.

Look upon that picture and upon this! These months of wrangling at conferences and of anti-Soviet acts (measured in one way by the almost complete cessation of Anglo-Soviet trade) provide a sad contrast, on which the Labour elector may well ponder, when he has rejected the superficial falsities of the *Daily Herald* and *Daily Mail* eternally ascribing the fault to Russia—with distinct echoes recently of Goebbels' "Bolshevism and the Jews." Actually the cause of this contrast lies deeper than any mere tergiversation by a Bevin or an Attlee and is inherent in the outlook and function of Social Democracy.

Social Democracy the Clue

Throughout they will be operating within the framework of British imperialism. Under these conditions the Labour Government would be undertaking the defence of capitalist interests at a time when its usual representatives are not in a position to do so directly. The labour movement may secure certain immediate benefits, but at the cost of accepting the role of safeguarding the interests of capitalist domination and especially the imperialist basis of capitalist power. As history has shown, this is the classical role of a Social Democratic administration, which in every example, such as the Weimar Republic of Germany, has been to represent the interests, not of the whole working-class, but of a small section who receive benefits from imperialism. This is one essential clue to the apparent paradox of the Labour Government's foreign policy. It is also the clue to their fight against Communism. Those who see its dangers for the British working-class have to realise that it is not a matter only of fighting a reactionary foreign policy but of raising within the Labour Party the wider question whether there is to be a repetition of the errors of the past by leaders who have learned nothing from the life of Ramsay Macdonald. This becomes a central issue to be fought out within the working-class movement—for or against the influence of Social Democracy, which could ruin Britain as it once ruined Germany.

R. PAGE ARNOT.

July 21, 1946.

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A Year of Labour Government

by WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

ONE year of a Labour Government, one year with the benches of the House of Commons crowded with Labour members of Parliament. What a change for the erstwhile overlords, for those who had come to think of themselves as the divinely appointed rulers of the country! How proud they were, how insolent and how condescending—so long, of course, as those whom they patronised knew their place and bowed low before them in all humility.

How easy everything was for them. When they spoke, they spoke to their own, with only a minority of the discontented to interrupt their well-rounded periods. Sometimes we might anger them, but more often we excited their disdain. Even up to the last—to the very counting of the votes, they had no foreboding of the disaster that awaited them. With their trump card, Churchill, they were sure of victory, even though the count might be close. But their trump card turned out to be a deuce of the wrong suit, and for the first time in a long, long history, the ruling class of Britain (whether labelled Liberal or Tory) returned to the House of Commons, not as overlords, but as a disgruntled, discredited and demoralised minority.

Now they speak in an atmosphere that is almost completely beyond their reckoning. Their pretensions are laughed at, their posturing is greeted with derision and scorn. Front bench leaders who, hitherto, were presented as "great" men, the foremost of our political leaders, as often as not struggle to speak against a barrage of interruptions and ironic laughter. That sort of thing was tolerable, part of the business, when it was Liberal versus Tory, two groups of the one class. But it is different now that the Liberal Party has been absorbed by the Tories, and the combination of all that stands for "Free Enterprise" (the right to loot the country) is faced with the representatives of those who refuse any longer to be looted. How can they get back? That is the thought ever in their minds. "They'll never get back," declare the triumphant Labour majority. Let the Labour Government carry out Labour's programme and the Tory gang is finished for ever. There is truth in that. There is also a warning. While we welcome the truth we should take heed of the warning. For all the time the enemy will seek for an opening through which he can penetrate and break up our forces. It may seem that such a course is doomed to defeat and disappointment, nevertheless it remains the one great hope of the Tory Party.

On the Bank of England Bill, they could do nothing in the way of direct opposition. The situation in the country and throughout the world was far too serious and anything like an attempt to retain the old anarchy in our finances could have brought them nothing but further ruin. Of course, the change brought about was more formal than some of us desired. But with control of the Bank of England, supplemented by investments control in such a way as to ensure that money, which might otherwise have gone overseas for the private profit of the investors, will now go to the building of our own industries, it can make a difference. Used with courage and imagination, these changes can be a big advantage in the fight for full employment and high wages.

Nor was there anything in the proposal to nationalise the coal mines

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that could provide the Tories with an opportunity. Already during the period of the coalition, the Reid Report had exposed the woeful neglect of the mines of the country. This Report, accepted by the coalition Government, left but a very short step to nationalisation, and that step the Tories could do no other than take. Not only so, but, on the Committee, the leaders of the Tory side were Captain Crookshanks and Mr. Harold MacMillan, and, during the proceedings, Shinwell, who did a great job in piloting the Bill, was able to quote from a book written by MacMillan, before the war, advocating nationalisation of the mines as the only way of restoring the industry.

As a matter of fact, the only question on which opposition to the Mines Bill could have been organised, would have been on the subject of compensation to the coalowners; and that opposition was only capable of being organised on the Labour side of the House and the Committee. Undoubtedly, feeling was very strong on this. The Bill allowed for £150 millions being spent to make good the neglect of the mineowners, and yet in face of this glaring neglect, we propose to pay them compensation for a semi-bankrupt industry.

This obvious tendency to follow orthodox methods in an entirely new and unorthodox situation was already damping down the early elation of the Labour side of the House. It was a vigorous, enthusiastic and determined body of men and women, who, in the first flush of victory, sent the strains of the Red Flag resounding through the House. But as Bill after Bill came before them, with no really effective step taken to ensure their speedy passage, despite the Select Committee on procedure, their enthusiasm could be seen to flag.

For there has been an abundance of Bills, all of them useful in their way, but all subject to considerable delay and, in some cases, at most interminable discussion, the only result of which has meant long sittings, often into the small hours of the morning. On these occasions Labour members are not encouraged to speak. Most, if not all, of the time is taken up by the Opposition, the Labour members having but to patiently endure and hold on through the "night watch" ready to give a vote when a division is challenged.

But the most serious cause of depression is undoubtedly the foreign policy being pursued by Bevin, with the full support of the Labour Government. Here I do not propose to go into this question or to discuss the danger it represents for the working-class of this country and for progressive people everywhere. The British Labour Government, if it becomes a tool of Wall Street, will become a menace to the world. All I will say is that Bevin, who is boosted as a bluff, blunt speaker who holds nothing back, has never been heard, even to whisper a blunt, bluff word to Byrnes, however much he may have banged the table in his encounters with Molotov.

Byrnes and Wall Street are sacrosanct. Maybe now that the Loan is through, we may see a change for the better. Certainly there cannot be a change for the worse. We have reached the lowest possible depths in our cringing to America. The line of Churchill at Fulton, Missouri, has been the line followed by Bevin and the Foreign Office.

But it would be a mistake to treat Bevin and his policy as something apart from the Government as a whole. When the Government was formed, its character was clear for all to see. It was a Government of the "Right," with not a solitary representative of the "Left" finding a place. There were some who had the foolish belief that such a Minister as Aneurin

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Bevan was of the "Left." But a perusal of his speeches and writings make it clear that he never had any effective association with, or loyalty to, any "Left-wing" grouping. His "Leftism" was of a purely opportunist character, a fact which Morrison and company fully understood.

A Government of the Right cannot be other than timid. Always there is the dread of stirring up the slumbering fires of the class war, if they go too far and force the Tories to come out in the open. Once that happens, the response of the workers will be overwhelming and beyond the control and direction of such leaders as Attlee and Morrison.

It is this timidity that keeps the Foreign Office staff and Corps of Ambassadors as Tory as they were in the days of Castlereagh. It is this timidity that has them continually protesting their love of Empire and their desire to retain the title of Empire at all costs.

So we got the Mission to India, setting off with brave words, brave words cheered by the Tories when they were delivered by Attlee in the House of Commons, but with the obvious intent of getting from amongst the forces in India, those who were willing to make a deal of such a nature that would ensure, under another guise, the supremacy of Britain and the retention of India as the glittering jewel in the Crown of Empire.

"We won India by the sword—by the sword we will hold it," declared Joynson-Hicks to a cheering conference of Conservatives twenty years ago. But we cannot any longer hold it "by the sword": so we must try some other way. The fraud of talk about independence for India is manifest when we see what is happening in Malaya and Burma. There we are still able to "hold by the sword" and so for these territories "independence" is indefinitely postponed.

But while foreign and colonial policy is admittedly of a very questionable character, on both subjects criticism being expressed by an ever growing body of labour members, there is a general belief that in home policy things are different. On the home front things are going very well, so we are continually being told. But listen carefully. Keep your eye on some of the questions. Hearken to some of the speeches and see how critical Labour members are becoming on certain aspects of home affairs. They are beginning to realise that there cannot be a progressive home policy if there is a reactionary foreign policy.

True, there was a certain welcome relief in taxation for many workers, as well as for higher income tax payers, but alas, nothing else in the Budget to raise any hope of a real attempt to put an end to privilege and to equalise the purchasing power of the people. Despite all that has been said in this connection, it is obvious to everyone that if the controls were removed and rationing dispensed with, half the population would starve to death. The big income boys would buy up everything. As it is, they buy up all sorts of luxury goods in all sorts of Black Markets. And this despite the fact that Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is the most robust and forceful Minister on the Government Front Bench.

Stories of all kinds circulate around the Lobbies of the House of Commons. Most of them have to be swallowed with very great care. For instance, I was told just the other day that Dalton had said to some of his friends that, if he had been made Foreign Secretary, he would have flown direct to Moscow to work out on the spot a satisfactory basis for the relationship of this country and the U.S.S.R. This may be just another story, but it has to be noted, while

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Dalton has never disguised his opposition to the Communists and the Communist Party, he has never given any indication of antipathy to the Soviet Union, such as colours the language and the actions of Bevin. Here it may be said that Dalton is a typical intellectual, with a petty-bourgeois background, while Bevin is a trade union leader with a working-class background. But it has been known before in history, where two such men have passed one another, the intellectual moving towards the working-class, the trade union leader moving away from the working-class to find a place in the ranks of the bourgeoisie.

But leaving such philosophical reflections aside, we will get back to our muttons.

The fact that no major change was made in our financial system, was evident when we got the provisions of the National Insurance Scheme. This, it should be recognised, is a much-needed and valuable reform, but the rates of benefit are too low and the failure to meet the demand of the old age pensioners for 30s. per week, a moderate sum for our industrial veterans, was a severe blow to many Labour members, who had given long service to the cause of the old folks.

It has been said that National Insurance, like many other Government proposals, was taken over from the Coalition Government. It is true that the Coalition had already considered such a measure arising out of acceptance of the general line of the Beveridge Report. But had a Tory majority been returned we would have had to wait a long time for national insurance or any other of the many important measures passed by the present Parliament. This we must always have in mind when we are criticising the weaknesses of the administration.

This past year has been one of the busiest Parliament has ever known. A mere catalogue of the measures dealt with would fill a column or two of the LABOUR MONTHLY. Here I have only touched on one or two of the most important, leaving to the end the most important of all, Health and Housing.

Regarding the former, I am not in favour of the regional administration which it is proposed to set up. Our health services and our hospitals should from top to bottom be under democratic control. While we insist on democratisation of our industries and particularly so in connection with the nationalised coal mines, we see the opposite principle being applied to health and hospitals. And it won't work satisfactorily. Sooner or later the machinery of administration will have to be simplified and democratised, if we are to get the best results from our services.

But housing, that is going to be the great test for the Labour Government. I believe it can come out successful. As a matter of fact, it will have to. We cannot allow it to fail. That would mean irreparable disaster. Therefore, every worker connected with the industry must give of his best. Not only housing, but the future of the working-class, is at stake. While we will give all assistance to the Government in the carrying out of its housing programme, we must again take note of, and condemn, its timidity. For housing, apart from labour and materials, land and money is necessary. Instead of taking over the land and securing the best of it for agriculture and the rest for housing and amenities, we get this issue side-stepped by a measure to enable local authorities to acquire land by compulsory purchase. This is a feeble way to tackle such a problem and it can lead to very bad results, such as some local authorities using valuable agricultural land as sites for houses.

On the financial side, the Chancellor

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has recently announced a reduction in the rate of interest on loans for building purposes. But already many, if not all, local authorities are so burdened with interest payments, that it is only with the greatest difficulty they can carry on. Take the local authorities out of the hands of the moneylenders. That should be the constant urge of the Chancellor of the Government.

But on top of all these tasks and the problems associated with them, has arisen, in the sharpest form, the question of food—bread rationing. Eagerly the Tories watch for an opening. Would the labour movement close its ranks and balk them of all opportunity? Bournemouth gave an answer that filled them with delight. The Labour leaders were determined to keep the movement divided, nay, to do their utmost to widen the breach. Churchill and Co. could ask no better. Now with the food crisis, they think they see their chance. They pose as the spokesmen of the housewives. "A bunch of hypocrites," as Jean Mann called them. They will try to split the working-class in such a way as to tear away a section of the support won at the General Election. The only answer to this unscrupulous campaign of the Tories is—working class unity.

The first year of the Labour Government has much to its credit. Many valuable measures, much hard work. But we want more than that. We want courage and drive to put the Tories and those they represent out of business for good and all. For that the Communist Party is required. Despite Bournemouth, unity must prevail.

The Second Paris Conference

by QUAESTOR

THE Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers in June and July, 1946, marks a new stage in relations between the three great Allies of the anti-Hitler world war. This is due, not to any failure to reach practical agreements—on the contrary, important agreed results emerged from the meeting, giving the lie to many interested prophets of calamity—but to the emergence into the open of serious differences in the treatment of Germany and the relics of fascism in Europe.

Before surveying briefly the achievements of the Conference and the divergences it revealed, however, it will be helpful to recall certain basic tendencies in relations between the capitalist Great Powers and the U.S.S.R. before and during the war.

The prewar history of Europe was dominated, from 1918 to 1939, by two main tendencies in the policy of the capitalist Powers—to weaken the U.S.S.R. and to encourage Germany, so far as it would maintain an anti-Soviet policy. The latter tendency was marked enough, even before 1933, when Hitler came to power, and became oppressively obvious afterwards. The combination of the two had the effect of paralysing international efforts at collective security, even when they were made.

Soviet statesmen understood this situation, and said so publicly. Litvinov said in an election speech at Leningrad, on June 23, 1938, that among the ruling classes in Western States there was the fear "that for the necessary balance in the struggle against the aggressor countries, co-operation with the Soviet Union will inevitably be required and this, it appears, might also

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have an effect . . . adverse to the reactionary circles. Thus, it appears these circles prefer to sacrifice their national interests, endanger and even lose their positions as States, for the sake of preserving their social and class positions.'' Molotov, reporting at the Supreme Soviet on August 31, 1939, said about the abortive Anglo-Franco-Soviet negotiations in Moscow: ''On the one hand, the British and French Governments fear aggression, and for that reason would like to have a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, in so far as it would strengthen them—Great Britain and France. But on the other hand, the British and French Governments are afraid that the conclusion of a real pact of mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R. may strengthen our country—the Soviet Union—which it appears does not answer their purpose. One cannot but see that these fears outweighed other considerations.''

It was this policy, as much as the imperialist aggression of Hitlerite Germany, which brought about the war. But during the war, in a new form adapted to the changed circumstances, the same policy went on.

So long as Hitler did not attack in Western Europe, i.e., from September, 1939, until April, 1940, the Chamberlain-Churchill Government in Britain and the Reynaud-Daladier Government in France, did not attack either; instead, they did their best to get involved in war with the U.S.S.R. over Finland—a policy which made sense only if they hoped that Germany in that event would join in. Throughout the war in its later phase, after Hitler's attack on the U.S.S.R.—to be more precise, from 1942 onwards—we now know (incidentally from indiscretions of the Americans) that the policy of the Churchill-Attlee-Bevin Government was to refuse a Second Front to the Russians as long as possible—a policy which made no military sense (and therefore Eisenhower was opposed to, and horrified by it) but which did have sense if the aim was to weaken the U.S.S.R. as much as possible, relative to Great Britain, by letting the Russians do most of the fighting and bleeding. At the same time British Government agents incited massacre of the Yugoslav partisans by Mihailovich, British generals at Cairo encouraged Greek fascists and royalists to suppress democratic tendencies in the Greek army and navy, and the British Government in London protected and encouraged the Polish emigrant government in a furious anti-Soviet campaign throughout 1942 and 1943.

The only reason why this policy did not paralyse the common anti-Hitler cause in wartime as it had done in peacetime was that the Soviet Union and the Red Army were too strong.

It is this policy again, firmly pursued through more than twenty-five years of peace and war, which needs to be borne in mind when we try to understand the Paris Conference of Foreign Ministers; and the fact that the British representative on this occasion was a Labour Foreign Secretary (associated with Churchill all through the war) is a secondary question. Unfortunately, it is not their political labels that determine the significance of what statesmen do. ''By their fruits ye shall know them.''

Everyone must recognise that, like previous Conferences at which serious efforts at compromise were made, the Paris meeting did produce a number of positive results. This is important, not because the separate results in themselves were ideal from a Socialist point of view—several of them were far from it—but for two other reasons. First, they represented a resounding defeat for powerful reactionary interests in Britain, the U.S.A. and France who were openly preaching a rupture on outstanding issues and the

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isolation of the U.S.S.R. This, in its turn, meant discouragement for the fascists scattered throughout Europe and for the Roman Catholic Church, their chief patron. Secondly, a public demonstration was given that it is futile to "be tough with the Russians," i.e., to try and bully them. On question after question a reasonable compromise was achieved, only thanks to the abandonment of such tactics.

A survey of the important points on which agreement was arrived at will show this.

1. Trieste, disputed between Italy and Yugoslavia (which was deprived of its historic rights to the city when Austria-Hungary broke up in 1918, only because Italy was then the stronger) is to become a "Free Territory," governing itself by fully democratic machinery, with a United Nations Governor, and equal rights for Italians and Slavs.

2. The Soviet claim to reparations from Italy for the frightful desolation and murders effected by the fascist soldiery (the amount, $100 millions, is about one-twentieth of the damage) was accepted. Reparations are to be paid over seven years, for the last five of which, as the U.S.S.R. asked, they are to take the form of goods from current production.

3. Italy definitely loses her former colonies, which remain temporarily under British administration, the four chief Allied Powers to determine their final disposal jointly within twelve months. The four Powers can send commissions of enquiry to the colonies to hear the opinions of the inhabitants.

4. The Dodecanese islands in the eastern Mediterranean, seized by Italy after the last war, but inhabited from the earliest times by Greeks, are to be restored to Greece.

5. The Italian Navy is to be distributed among the Allies who suffered Italian aggression (including Yugoslavia and Greece) and Italy will retain only a small number of ships, of which not all will be the newest types.

6. Within three months of the signature of the peace treaties with Italy and Bulgaria respectively, all British and American troops will be withdrawn from the one and Soviet troops from the other.

7. Exceptionally important was the agreement (i) to summon the twenty-one Allied States to a Peace Conference on July 29, in order to adopt the five treaties with enemy satellites which were almost complete—those with Italy, Bulgaria, Roumania, Finland and Hungary (ii) to propose definite rules of procedure at the Peace Conference (all four Powers pledging themselves to support the proposed scheme and all other decisions taken at Paris) thus preventing technical questions being used as a mask for political divergences, as they were when the question of Franco Spain was recently discussed at the Security Council.

These are the positive results. But it would be shortsighted and harmful not to recognise also that, before they were reached, a number of facts emerged in the discussions which should cause serious concern to the British labour movement.

1. In the discussions on Trieste, it became clear that the British and American delegations throughout were treating Yugoslavia as though it were the enemy country and Italy the ally. Yet Yugoslavia is an Ally which in its heroic struggle throughout the war lost nearly 1,700,000 lives (nearly three times as many as Britain and the U.S.A. put together): a country, moreover in which fascism has been thoroughly broken and its economic basis—monopoly capitalism and feudal conditions in agriculture—destroyed. Italy is but a belated "co-belligerent," the people of which bear some considerable responsibility for making good the destruction done by

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fascism: and, moreover Italian fascism, and its economic foundations are far from eliminated, as many foreign observers have reported.

2. In the discussions on Italian reparations, it turned out that Britain and the U.S.A. had already collected $4,000 millions from Italy for expenses of their armies of occupation—in lire, which could be exchanged for Italian goods—yet they strongly resisted the Soviet Union's modest demand that its $100 millions of reparations should be delivered chiefly in goods. Furthermore, while they were heavily "scaling down" the Soviet claims, they asked for *full* compensation for the property of United Nations nationals destroyed in Italy (estimated at $45 millions in the case of France $40-50 millions for Great Britain and possibly $110 millions for the U.S.A.). And they only dropped this claim when Molotov asked for full compensation for Soviet citizens for their property destroyed in the U.S.S.R. by Italian occupation forces. Again they demanded that *all* Italian property in their respective countries (estimated at £11 millions, or $45 millions, in the case of Great Britain) should be forfeited, to set off other *private* claims against Italy for damage. Thus the Labour Government delegation, no less than the delegation of the Wall Street Government, showed itself far more concerned for the property of capitalist trusts and investors than for the property of its Socialist Ally and its citizens.

3. In the discussions on the peace treaties with the Balkan States, Bevin, supported by Byrnes, insisted that the treaties should include a clause providing for the restoration of the former "International Commission" and "European Commission" on the Danube—two bodies from which the U.S.S.R., by express British Government action, was excluded in 1919 and 1921, and which provided foreign imperialist States with a foothold on the Danube, under the guise of "guaranteeing freedom of traffic." When this was resisted, Bevin demanded a four-power declaration of "*intention* . . . that navigation should be kept open," i.e., that control of the Danube should not be in the hands ot the States bordering on it, as with other great world waterways (*except the Suez and Panama Canals*) but of four Great Powers, of whom only one —the U.S.S.R.—has its borders on the river.

4. In the discussions on the Peace Conference, it became clear that Bevin and Byrnes were striving to go there with their hands absolutely free (Byrnes declared at first that the U.S.A. would not be bound by any agreement arrived at in Paris!). They opposed even a preliminary agreement on rules of procedure. This could only mean one thing—that differences between the Great Powers at Paris would be carried into the Peace Conference, each trying to line up as many of the smaller States as possible on its own side: the absolute negation of the principle of Great Power solidarity proclaimed at Moscow (1943); Yalta and Potsdam (1945). They were even pressing, for example, that the "general commission" of the Peace Conference, instead of being an anciliary body co-ordinating the work of the various special commissions and preparing the work of the full Conference (just as the deputy Foreign Ministers prepared the work of their chiefs at Paris), should consist of the heads of delegations sitting in secret, i.e., in fact, should do the work of the Conference—including the line-up previously mentioned—but behind closed doors. This would have meant that the public could only get versions garbled by the various "spokesmen" and "special correspondents"—as, in fact, happened to a considerable extent during the Paris meeting.

Summing up these facts, it is no

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more than the truth to say that they reveal (i) special tenderness for the fascists and hostility to anti-fascists; (ii) special concern to weaken the U.S.S.R.

But most revealing of all was the discussion on Germany—in which Molotov put Soviet views on record, in two documents of historic importance. The discussion itself must be judged against the background of the Potsdam decisions (July, 1945) and of how they are being carried out. Of this latter, the files of papers like *The Times* and the *New Statesman*—not to speak of the reports presented by the delegations of the British T.U.C. and the World Federation of Trade Unions—are full of damning evidence.

Potsdam provided that all German armed forces would be disbanded, all leading Nazis, militarists and their collaborators arrested and eliminated from public or business posts and their trusts broken up, a reparations plan drawn up within six months under which German war potential above a purely peace level would be handed over to Allied countries as reparations or destroyed, inter-Allied control established over what remained and German economy put on a peaceful basis as soon as possible.

In reality (i) scores of thousands of German soldiers in the western zones are still embodied in military units as "labour corps," "guards," etc.; (ii) hundreds of leading Nazi officials and business men have been reappointed to important posts (including the police) in the British and American zones; (iii) many of the chief trusts are still flourishing and have had their factories returned; (iv) the reparations plan has *not* been drawn up and the deliveries of dismantled factories on account reduced to a mere trickle (3½ per cent. was Molotov's figure)—where they were not stopped altogether, as by General Clay (U.S. Army); (v) the Ruhr, Germany's main arsenal, remains exclusively under British control; (vi) the great landed estates, the historic basis of German militarism for two hundred years, have been broken up among the peasantry *only in the Soviet zone; (vii) some* Roman Catholic priests freely act as the vehicle of Nazi propaganda in the western zone, while many obstacles are placed in the way of the functioning of free trade unionism.

Faced with this situation, Molotov proposed (i) immediate enquiry into the degree to which military disarmament has been carried out; (ii) drawing up of a complete plan, within two months, for economic disarmament, by destruction of war industries or reparations deliveries and by breaking up the big estates and the trusts; (iii) establishment of inter-Allied control of the Ruhr; (iv) drawing up of a programme for the development of German peace industry and foreign trade; (v) setting up a central German administration (proposed by the U.S.S.R. a year ago) as a step towards the creation of a single German Government "sufficiently democratic to be able to extirpate all remnants of fascism in Germany and sufficiently responsible to be able to fulfil all its obligations towards the Allies." Molotov demanded recognition that the U.S.S.R. was entitled to $10,000 millions as reparations, a small part of the damage done by the Germans, adding:—

> It is possible that the United States of American and Great Britain, which did not experience the sufferings of occupation, somewhat underrate the value of reparation to the U.S.S.R. But the peoples of the Soviet Union cannot accept such an attitude towards their legitimate claims.

Byrnes and Bevin flatly rejected all these proposals. While replying only in the vaguest and most general terms about the specific violations of the Potsdam agreement referred to above (e.g., Bevin's statement on July 10 that denazification "might take a longer

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time than some supposed'') they refused an enquiry into military disarmament, on the pretext that they wanted one on economic disarmanent as well—although they did not attempt to deny that the reparations plan provided at Potsdam had never been drawn up, so that there was nothing to enquire into. Bevin refused to establish inter-Allied control of the Ruhr. Both he and Byrnes refused to admit the Soviet figure for reparations. And, at the same time, they both pressed most strongly for ''economic unity'' of the zones, threatening that they would establish it as between themselves, i.e., in Western Germany, if the U.S.S.R. would not fulfil the Potsdam agreement on this point.

This question of who has been violating the Potsdam agreement is no formal one—nor is it one of ''the pot calling the kettle black.'' A glance at the Potsdam document will show that its essential aim, expressly stated and then made concrete in thousands of words, was that ''German militarism and Nazism will be extirpated'': and the provisions for economic unity, exchanges between the zones, etc., depend entirely on this main purpose. Moreover, this is only elementary logic. To restore German industry and exports *before* the main purposes of Potsdam are carried out would mean to breathe new life into shattered German inperialism—and fascism. To establish ''economic unity'' betweeu the Soviet zone—where fascism and its economic roots have been stamped out and the western zones—where they are still very much alive—without insisting as a preliminary that the British, American and French Governments do their part of the *essential* work decided on at Potsdam, means in fact that a reprieve is granted to German monopoly-capital, landlordism and Nazism in the western zones, it can benefit by the economic progress of the Soviet zone, and thus set about rebuilding for the next war. And to announce that, failing such ''economic unity,'' Britain and America will build up their zones on the existing basis means, *in fact, that they intend to rebuild German imperialism under their own wing, so to speak.* Of course, Bevin is doing it ''to relieve the British taxpayer'': of course Byrnes is doing it to ''encourage democracy'': but the *effect* is that stated, and no other.

Thus, on the German question too, the Paris Conference has shown a strange and sinister continuation of the pre-war policy of (i) doing everything possible to weaken and isolate the U.S.S.R.; (ii) favouring the revival of German monopoly capitalism and fascism. There is no space at present to do more than mention that the short discussion on Austria revealed the same fundamental tendency.

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Independence for India?

by R. PALME DUTT

***(The following excerpts are drawn from a chapter in the new edition of* India Today, *which is being published in India—*Ed. L.M.)**

"Our strike has been an historic event in the life of our nation. For the first time the blood of men in the services and men in the streets flowed together in a common cause. We, in the services, will never forget this. We know also that you, our brothers and sisters, will not forget. Long live our great people. Jai Hind!"

Last message of the Naval Central Strike Committee, Bombay, February 23, 1946.

"India, in the opinion of many, was on the verge of a revolution before the British Cabinet Mission arrived. The Cabinet Mission has, at least, postponed, if not eliminated, the danger."

(P. J. Griffiths, leader of the European Group in the Indian Central Legislative Assembly, speech to the East India Association in London, June 24, 1946.)

IN June, 1946, the Labour Prime Minister, C. R. Attlee, speaking at the Labour Party Conference, declared:—

We ask for others the freedom we ask for ourselves. We proclaim this freedom but we do more than proclaim it. We seek to put it into effect: witness India.

Similarly, the Chairman of the Labour Party, Prof. Laski, declared in an interview in the Indian press (published in the Indian press on May 23, 1946):—

It is the biggest abdication of power in modern history in a non-violent way made by any imperialist power to any people and I hope Indian nationalist leaders will appreciate this offer made on a gold platter.

This view of the new British constitutional proposals in 1946 has received wide publicity in the world press, and especially in the Anglo-American press, which has been lost in admiration of British self-abnegation.

On the other hand, this view has by no means been accepted by Indian opinion. On June 1, 1946, the official All-India Congress Committee *News Letter* published its verdict.

What we fear has come to pass. The Cabinet Mission, in trying to accommodate communal and feudal interests, have ignored the larger interests of the nation. The British Ministers meant well and did their best, but their best has unfortunately turned out to be not much better than what even Messrs. Churchill and Amery were willing to concede in March, 1942 . . . The independence that has been promised is so hedged-in with restrictions that it is a misnomer to call it by that name."

What is the reason for this complete divergence of viewpoint between British imperialist self-praise and Indian dissatisfaction? Do the British constitutional proposals of 1946 represent the final abdication of British imperialism and recognition of Indian independence? Or do they represent the last of the long series of attempts of British imperialism to evolve a constitutional compromise, so as to adapt itself to changing conditions and the rising Indian national demand, while retaining the essence of its power and domination? Do the new proposals represent Indian freedom? Or do they represent only a facade and show of giving India freedom, nullified in practice by the impenetrable jungle of qualifications, restrictions and limitations?

India in the Changing World.

Why was the Cabinet Mission sent to India in 1946? Four main reasons

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may be noted for the new trend in British policy.

First, the end of the war brought a new popular upsurge all over the world. Fascism, the main spearhead of reaction in the present era, the leader of the offensive against democracy and the most brutal exponent of the open and unconcealed theory of racial domination, had been defeated by the united struggle of the democratic peoples. Now, German, Italian and Japanese imperialism had been wiped from the ranks of the Powers. Anglo-American imperialism remained, but had to share world leadership with the Socialist Soviet Union in an uneasy partnership of the three world powers. The Soviet Union, despite the grim losses of the war whose main burden had fallen on the Red Army and the Soviet people, emerged from the war enormously strengthened in its world position and influence. The liberated European nations pressed forward along the path of advanced democratic power against the old feudal and militarist and big business forces which had betrayed the national cause and served Hitler. Japan's grip on China was broken and the march of the Chinese national and democratic movement was resumed, despite pressure of American reaction placing obstacles in the path. All the colonial peoples were in movement, proclaimed their freedom for which their liberation movement had fought. In this new world situation there should be no question of maintaining unchanged the old autocratic and bureaucratic regime in India, the greatest colonial territory of all and with the most powerfully developed national movement.

Second, the British empire was basically weakened, despite its share in the common victory. The relative decline of British capitalism both in its economy at home and in its position in world economy, and in its hold on its colonial empire, had been a marked feature of the era between the two wars. This relative decline from the old dominant world position was carried still further forward by the effects of the second world war. Older statesmen of British imperialism, like a Smuts or a Churchill, observed with alarm the growing and preponderant relative strength of what they termed the two "colossus" powers of the new world, the United States and the U.S.S.R., and the prospect of Britain sinking to second or third rank. On every side the British Empire was assailed by the challenging pressure of the peoples held directly or indirectly within its orbit, from Egypt and Palestine to Burma and Malaya and Indonesia.

The masses of the British people awakening to the new conditions, were turning away from Toryism to find a new path for British progress and prosperity. But the old rulers of the Empire were seeking by all means to maintain and restore the old disintegrating basis of domination. They sought to re-establish colonial suppression in the reconquered territories, as in Burma and Malaya and Indonesia. They sought to counter the changed world balance by a new imperialist alliance, first by the attempted device of a Western European bloc and when this failed, in the face of opposition of the European peoples, by the alignment of Anglo-American bloc against the Soviet Union. In all these new strategic calculations, India was of primary importance. It became essential for the weakening British imperialism, alike for its economic requirements and for strategic plans, to find a basis of settlement in India which, while serving to appease and if possible to win over the upper sections of the national movement should hold India within the British economic and strategic orbit.

Third, the change in the world position of Britain was reflected also in the

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internal position in Britain. Toryism went down in overwhelming electoral defeat in the summer of 1945, despite every attempt of the old Tory electoral machine to capitalise the moment of victory, and the prestige of Churchill. For the first time a Labour majority was returned to power. Although the moderate right wing leaders of the Labour Party who composed the new Government were, in practice, closely allied to Tory British imperialist policy as subsequent experience has soon showed, the mass rejection of Toryism in the elections was a sign that the British people were beginning to seek new positions to replace the old imperialist basis. The Labour Party Conference, following the Trade Union Congress, had already adopted a resolution sponsored from the movement and in the face of initial resistance from the Executive Committee for Indian independence. Thus the labour movement was officially committed to Indian independence and it became imperative for the new Labour Government to make some fresh departure in policy in relation to India.

The fourth reason of decisive importance was the rising popular upsurge within India and universal national demand for immediate independence. Imperialism could no longer continue to govern India in the old manner.

There follows an account of the naval rising of February, as part of the national upsurge of 1945-6. *Then, after a detailed account, with full documentation, of the stages of the Cabinet Mission up to its departure on June* 29, *the chapter concludes as follows:—*

The new Constitutional Plan of 1946 has been widely presented to world opinion as a plan for Indian freedom. Yet an examination of its provisions can only lead to the conclusion that it was in reality little more than a repetition of the Cripps offer of 1942, and very far from the establishment of Indian freedom or the right of democratically elected representatives of the Indian people to choose their own future.

The plan undoubtedly represented a skilful attempt to adapt British policy to the new situation in India. The main proposals were designed to break the deadlock which during the preceding years had held up any constitutional development in India even though the character of its machinery was such as to hold out the prospect of many new deadlocks in the sequel. It presented the basis for possible support and co-operation by the Congress and the Moslem League. It held out a hypothetical offer of future independence. It proposed the formation of an Interim Government based on the main parties. These proposals carried a very slight step further forward the lines of the Cripps offer of 1942, the August offer of 1940 and the 1935 Federal Constitution. But the limitations of the Plan were glaring.

First, the hypothetical offer of future choice between Dominion status and independence was very far from the demands of all Indian political organisations without exception. The issue of independence was, in fact, left to be decided by an unrepresentative body whose composition and procedure were determined by the British award and weighted in a reactionary direction.

Second, the indispensable basis for any democratic choice of a constitution, that is, the election of a democratic Constituent Assembly based on universal suffrage was refused, nominally on the grounds of haste. The composition of the Constituent Assembly was undemocratic in that it perpetuated communal division; it was indirectly elected from Assemblies, based on an electorate representing 11 per cent. of the population, and in addition was weighted by 93 nomi-

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nees of the Princes representing one-quarter of the whole.

Third, no provision was made for democracy in the territory of the Princes constituting one-third of India. Arrangements with the Princes were left entirely to voluntary negotiations, including with regard to the matter of their representation in the Constituent Assembly. The States were not only left in untouched, but by the ending of paramountcy, if no agreement was reached in the interval with their consent, they would be legally and diplomatically independent sovereign states.

Fourth, the Plan partitioned India into four zones; one Hindu majority zone; two Moslem majority zones and the fourth zone of the Princes' States. No provision was made for the consultation of the wishes of the inhabitants over this partition, which was arbitrarily laid down as an award. This partition had nothing in common with any principle of self-determination. The resulting three-tier structure would be extremely cumbrous and possibly even unworkable in practice.

Fifth, on the basis of this partition, the Centre was left with very weak and limited powers. In particular it lacked powers for economic planning or social regulation on an all India scale, such as would be essential for progressive democratic advance, effective large-scale economic reconstruction and the raising of social standards.

Sixth, during the interim period no transfer of power was proposed; the old constitution would continue and the Interim Government would only be a reconstituted Viceroy's Council with the veto and over-riding powers still available in case of need.

Seventh, military occupation would continue during the indefinite interim period, so that the elaboration of the new constitution would take place under the shadow of military occupation.

Eighth, the Constituent Assembly would not be sovereign. The new constitution drawn up by it would not be valid until approved by the British; and British approval would be dependent on the fulfilment of two conditions, satisfaction of the British rulers as to adequate provisions for the protection of minorities and acceptance of an Indo-British Treaty, both of which would have to be fulfilled before any cession of sovereignty would take place.

The scheme undoubtedly represented an attempt to find a basis of alliance with the upper-class leadership in India. As to the constitutional negotiations active steps were being taken to draw closer the bonds of British and Indian big capital. (Birla-Nuffield, Tata-I.C.I. Agreement, etc.)

The significance of this attempted alliance is not only in relation to the internal situation in India, but also in relation to the international situation. The aim to promote a settlement in India on the basis of an alliance with the upper-class leaders and with strong reactionary weightage to the Princes, represented an attempt not only to stabilise the situation in India, hold down the rising mass forces and protect British interests, but also to maintain India as a strategic base to make India an ally of British imperialism in its general world policy. This aspect was especially serious in view of the marked reactionary, anti-democratic and anti-Soviet trend of British world policy alongside the Indian negotiations. Anti-Soviet propaganda was very intensively spread in India during the negotiations. Military and strategic preparations were in practice strengthened at the same time as the talk was spread about independence.

The Commander-in-Chief, in answer to a motion in the Central Legislative Assembly demanding that the Indianisation of the Indian Army should be completed in ten years, answered that

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no time limit could be set and that Indianisation might take twenty or more years. Immediately following the Cabinet Mission's statement of policy, Field-Marshal Montgomery flew to India for special strategic consultations. It is obvious that these aspects of policy accompanying the Cabinet Mission's plan, although receiving less public attention at the time, could have very serious consequences for the future of India.

The general conclusion is inescapable. The Constitutional Plan of 1946 continued the old method of elaborate balancing and counterpoise of the different elements in Indian political life, especially building a political structure on communal antagonism and balancing the Congress as against the Moslem League with the Princes as the reactionary pivotal force, in such a way as to nullify in practice the supposed offer of Indian freedom and retain effective final control in their hands. British control was to continue during the critical and indefinite interim period and so be able to govern the whole character of the ensuing Constitution. British imperialism had not yet abdicated and transferred power to the Indian people. It had rather exploited all its ingenuity and age-old political experience to establish an elaborate, cumbersome, precarious machinery through which, even behind the formal facade of "Indian independence," it would be able to continue to manoeuvre and seek to maintain its essential economic and strategic domination. As the protracted negotiations which followed the announcement of the Cabinet Mission's plan dragged on during the summer of 1946, Indian opinion increasingly came to recognise that the final winning of Indian independence would still have to be achieved in the future.

World Trade Unionism Sets to Work

by CLEMENS DUTT

THE meeting of the Executive Bureau of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Moscow on June 21-27 received little attention in the press compared with the Foreign Ministers' conference in Paris, but it will have big repercussions in the activity of many millions of trade unionists all over the world whose combined force represents in the long run the main guarantee of world peace and democratic development. The Moscow session provided evidence that the new trade union international is not only growing in strength and authority but is seriously tackling the most vital world issues of the present time.

Thus it carried forward into action the unity and confidence which inspired its inception. It was precisely this spirit of exaltation and democratic fervour which made the World Trade Union Conference of February, 1945, so memorable. The historic character of that conference was felt by all. It was realised that for the first time in the history of the labour movement success had been achieved in uniting the overwhelming majority of the trade unionists of the world, and that the working-class, which everywhere made the biggest contribution to the fight against fascist enslavement and barbarism, was now in a position to play its due part in fashioning the peace settlement and preventing any return of war aggression or fascist reaction.

Animated by these ideals, at the reconvened world conference in October

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last the World Federation of Trade Unions came into being. The preamble to the Constitution, unanimously adopted at this foundation Congress, unequivocally proclaims the common objectives of all freedom-loving peoples, including among the prime purposes of the Federation "the extermination of all fascist forms of government and every manifestation of fascism under whatever form it operates and by whatever name it may be known."

Since then it has been a question of translating these aims into acts. The first meeting of the Executive Bureau, in December, 1945, was mainly devoted to establishing the necessary organisation for the World Federation. The second meeting, in February, 1946, already took up the most immediate tasks confronting the international labour movement. Naturally, these were largely determined by the need to secure that the world trade union international should be able to serve as the instrument by which the organised workers of all countries can play a direct part in establishing a just and lasting peace.

In the first place, the World Federation put forward its claim to participate in a consultative and advisory capacity in the work of the United Nations Organisation, particularly by representation in the Economic and Social Council. Unfortunately, owing primarily to the opposition of the United States' and British governments, the February meeting of the W.F.T.U. Executive had to record that the United Nations Organisation had relegated the W.F.T.U. to a subordinate position in respect of consultation and, despite its unique international character, had placed it in a position no higher than that conceded to non-governmental organisations belonging to a single nation, such as the American Federation of Labour.

While taking every opportunity to avail itself even of this limited scope, the W.F.T.U. has continued to press its claims and the recent session of the Executive in Moscow calls on the national trade union organisations to ask their governments to demand recognition for the W.F.T.U. in U.N.O. and to appeal directly to U.N.O. A body embracing nearly seventy million workers cannot be content with a secondary role in the world organisation for peace and there is no doubt the pressure of the rank and file membership will be exerted to overcome the short-sighted and reactionary opposition that has been evident from the representatives of certain governments.

From its very inception the W.F.T.U. realised the central importance of Allied policy in Germany for future peace and that the denazification and democratisation of Germany depended, above all, on the development there of a democratic trade union and labour movement. An international commission of investigation was sent by the W.F.T.U., which visited all four zones in Germany and prepared a most important report for consideration at the Moscow session.

This report is especially important because it brings out clearly the obstacles in the way of destroying the remnants of German fascism and of restoring a democratic way of life in Germany. It confirms fully the unsatisfactory progress of denazification in the Western zones and the small degree to which anti-Nazi trade union and democratic forces have been drawn into this work. The German trade unions are developing along fully democratic lines, but the Commission found that in the British and French zones, and to a lesser extent in the American zone, the organisation of city-wide unions was not yet complete. In the British zone, for example, the Commission found that out of 197 applications for permission to organise

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trade unions, none had reached the third stage at which they became fully functioning organisations.

The Executive Bureau of the W.F.T.U., at its meeting in Moscow, adopted the report of the Commission and addressed to the Allied Control Council in Berlin a number of recommendations for the free development of the trade unions on an industrial basis in all occupation zones. In particular, it recommended that the German trade unions should carry on systematic work of re-education in the democratic spirit and should take part in the work of all denazification committees. At the same time the attention of the Control Council was drawn to the penetration of Nazis into leading positions in trusts and enterprises and the danger of Nazis penetrating into the State machine and police.

A practical example of the W.F.T.U.'s leadership of the mass movement of working people is seen in its activity in the Spanish question. Already in February the Executive Bureau decided to request all national trade union centres to demand that their respective governments should sever diplomatic relations with Franco. In June, the matter was carried further. Reaffirming the need to put an end to this survival of fascism and recognising that scholastic discussions as to whether the Franco regime is a danger to peace serve only to reassure the Spanish Hitler, the W.F.T.U. bureau boldly assumes its role of leader in launching a world-wide mass movement against Franco. By its decisions for trade union pressure on U.N.O. and the governments of the Allied Nations, and in particular by the decision to organise mass demonstrations against the Franco regime all over the world in the period from July 18 to August 25, the W.F.T.U. brings into play the international solidarity of the workers in combating reaction.

Another danger spot which drew the attention of the W.F.T.U. is Greece. Representatives of the Greek Confederation of Trade Unions were present at the Moscow session and the W.F.T.U. Executive decided to protest against attempts on trade union freedom in Greece, to ask the four Powers to send a commission of investigation and to take steps to give moral and material support to the Greek trade unions.

One other point deserves mention. In the present period the importance of the labour movements in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is coming more and more to the forefront. It is precisely by the adhesion of the growing trade union movement of the Middle East and Asia that the membership of the W.F.T.U. has increased from sixty-five million to its present figure of sixty-nine millions. The W.F.T.U. has decided to send a commission to investigate the conditions for free trade union development in Korea, Malaya and Japan and to set up a department for the trade union movements of the colonial and mandated territories.

In a world in which the danger of reaction and instigation of war becomes increasingly evident, it is a hopeful sign that there is in existence a firmly founded world trade union international which is faithful to the aspirations of millions of ordinary people and expresses the solidarity between the progressive workers of all countries.

Among the trade union movements, of course, many differences of outlook and tactics exist. Nevertheless, the fact that the W.F.T.U. Executive was able to adopt unanimous decisions, and the fact that these decisions were not mere paper resolutions but decisions for action, shows that the new trade union international is built on a firm foundation and is fulfilling its role as coordinator and leader of the international labour movement in a manner

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far in advance of the old International Federation of Trade Unions.

In this achievement of militant unity the Soviet trade unions have undoubtedly played a great part. But the chief strength of the W.F.T.U. lies in the international solidarity of the organised workers all over the world who have delegated the defence of their interests to the W.F.T.U. The power and effectiveness of the W.F.T.U. depends, above all, on the support given it by every trade union organisation and every trade unionist in the realisation of its correct and timely decisions.

Prospects in the U.S.A.

by IVOR MONTAGU

WHEN Truman smashed the railway strike in U.S.A., and Big Business used Congress to blow the roof off price-control, they dealt a rude blow to the illusions sedulously peddled on this side of the Atlantic about the co-called common heritage of Anglo-Saxon ideals and Western concepts of democracy and the rest of the new Fulton Herrenvolk programme.

Both battles—that to safeguard trade union rights and to protect living standards against ruthless inflation—are still in full swing in U.S.A. Here is the stage they have reached.

The Roosevelt-established controls in general maintained prices and pegged wages and though, as always in a capitalist economy, the former ran away from the latter, its lead was a limited one. The trade unions (except Lewis) verbally renounced the right to strike in wartime and the employers were prevented by a Roosevelt veto from introducing through Congress legislatory bans to cripple the unions.

With the ending of the war, to guard against the slump, the unions sought to recover lost wage ground and gain overdue improvement of working conditions.

Seeing his chance in the railway strike, Truman stepped in with a speech of remarkable anti-union venom, demanding powers, in any case where he might discern a "national emergency," to give employers and employed forty-eight hours to settle; in default of settlement, to seize the industry or service concerned, order the men back on terms he chose to fix, jail for one year and fine any trade union leaders who disobeyed, deprive of accrued benefits of seniority any trade unionist who came out or stayed out.

This Truman Bill was to operate only for six months after the officially declared "end of the war." (Note: the "end of the war" for ending lend-lease and for abandoning food rationing in U.S.A. came long ago. Its "end" for quitting Iceland, or abandoning the claim to dragoon labour is still way ahead.)

The House of Representatives swallowed it with enthusiasm (306 to 13). The Senate, first deleting a provision that would have made excess profits (after dividends at current rates had been guaranteed to shareholders) payable to the Treasury for the period of State operation of a seized industry, substituted for Truman's emergency legislation their pet darling of a permanent annihilation of all that labour had gained in organisational rights during the Roosevelt administration—the Case Bill—which, among other things, proposed to make trade union members liable for "breach of contract" and forbade them to refuse to

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handle black goods if another union were out on strike.

With the November elections nearing, Presidential hopes for 1948 under his waistcoat, and the "crisis" atmosphere of the now called-off rail strike somewhat subsided, this Truman vetoed, foreshadowing a renewed form of anti-strike legislation for introduction after November.

Meanwhile, Big Business was pursuing its attack on labour conditions from the other end. A hot half-million is the sum that it is calculated manufacturers and traders' organisations have expended in bribes and lobbying in Congress since VJ day to defeat price-control.

A subservient House of Representatives, by a similar grand majority (356 to 42) emasculated the administration bill to maintain the Office of Price Administration. The Senate added amendments that would, in the words of President Truman justifying his subsequent veto, have sanctioned "thousands of needless price increases amounting to many billions of dollars," and wiped out all current wage settlements.

It provided for price increases to follow any cost increases since 1941, thus in Truman's words, presenting a "bonanza" to all manufacturers, for their volume of sales is far in excess of the figure at that date, and, since one product is used as raw material for another product, would have authorised increase to follow increase—inflating with "no stopping place in it."

Since the veto took the ceiling off altogether, the prices of twelve basic foodstuffs have risen 22.7 per cent. in ten days compared with 14.6 per cent. in three years of war previously; twenty-eight basic commodities 11.1 per cent. in ten days and 22 per cent. in twenty days. Meat has gone up 50 per cent. Rents 25 to 40 per cent. (Incidentally the last ten days insults to Britain and incitements against Russia of the loan debate knocked from 10 to 20 per cent. off the purchasing power of the gain that is supposed to go with the Bill).

And the Senate, refusing Truman's request for a temporary prolongation of existing controls while an agreed measure could be arrived at, is engaged on preparing a new version of its own that bans meat, poultry and egg ceilings (by 49 to 26) and milk and butter ceilings (by 51 to 27) and is already more useless than the bi.l he vetoed.

Thus the Bournemouth idyll, in which the hitching of the wagon of Socialist Britain to the U.S. star (not heeding the stripes) was represented as a logical and moral necessity, since America "is going our way," has already worn thin. And the "Anglo-American way of life" (counterposed to the oriental materialism of the Soviets) turns out to be only what such guff always is—a mock identity to veil a cleavage—in this case a most violent class war in which the alliance of Labour Britain with the U.S. administration is tantamount to a trade unionist sitting at strike negotiations on the bosses' side of the table.

"Get tough with Russia!" "Get tough with Labour!"—the twin cries of the hydra-headed millionaire press, radio and screen in U.S.A. today are not separate and purely temporal coincidentals in one of which Britain can become involved wholeheartedly without becoming accomplice of the other.

It is true that U.S.A. was the cradle and is still the shrine of some of the finest democratic conceptions in man's story—a hangover from the days of colonial struggle, frontier battles with natives, and the striding advance of youthful capitalism. Attachment to this ideology is so strong that it forces big business encroachment into a peculiar pattern.

Thus the assault on Labour has to be represented as defence of business

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against the tyranny of the unions; the abolition of ceilings on prices appears as the freeing of business enterprise; the backing up of fascist organisations abroad has to be disguised as "equal freedom for all currents of opinion"; imperialist domination of other countries cannot easily be effected by actual change of sovereignty and has in general to be economic in form, described as "liberty of trade."

But an America seen only in terms of the strength of this ideology is examined through a rose-coloured distorting lens. Abraham Lincoln (at Hartford in 1860) did say "Thank God that we have a system of labour where there can be a strike," but Abraham Lincoln was shot, and the forces that fought him and assassinated him are exalted in rather more than half the historical novels and a great deal more than half the historical movies issued in America today.

It should be appreciated that the Roosevelt era is equally dead. Died dead as mutton with the death of lend-lease. The spectacle of Hoover—whom Roosevelt would not tolerate within the White House—openly advocating, as Truman's representative, renewal of the use of food as a counter-revolutionary weapon, the sight of Dulles—Munichite lawyer, adviser to Dewey in his slander campaign against Roosevelt—as an international conference adviser to Byrnes, should remove all dubiety on that score.

There is no attempt to keep secret a desire to dominate the world, a conviction of the destiny to do so is widespread. Several U.S.A. newspapers express a whole programme, of which the atom bomb and other weapons rather more horrible are proudly proclaimed the agents.

To many Americans there seems nothing out of the ordinary in the fact that today, some ten months after the war was sufficiently "ended" for the abrupt termination of lend-lease, there are still two million American soldiers stationed in fifty-six foreign countries and so-called strategic islands that they did not occupy before the war started. It appears natural that the army should be constructing bases as far as 7,000 miles from the nearest U.S. shore (a Soviet base similarly distanced from U.S.S.R. would perhaps be in Venezuela) and that, as Senator Pepper points out, Congress has been faced with recommendation that the U.S.A. should maintain an army of a million, a navy equal in total to all others afloat (500,000 men, 1,000 ships in active reserve) an air force of 500,000 so based that the entire world is in its range, conscription, current war plants maintained as stand-by plants with "strategic" and "critical" materials stockpiled from the ends of the earth, scores of major bases reaching from California to China, the Arctic to the Antarctic, in the Pacific and correspondingly in the Atlantic—plus "the Bomb," being accumulated as fast as possible.

The most powerful organs of monopoly capital in the world exist in America, and their grip on their own national economy is extending yearly. In 1921, 250 largely linked corporations controlled 40 per cent. of the national wealth and economy. In 1939, 50 per cent.; in 1946, 60 per cent. The Morgan empire alone controls 30 per cent., the Rockefellers about 15 per cent., the Duponts and Mellons about 10 per cent.

The most open assaults on freedom of thought and political liberty take place in America. The notorious Congressional Committee on Un-American activities (headed now by Rankin, at one time by Dies) is already busy denigrating every shade of radical and progressive opinion under the guise of fighting "Communism." Rankin himself calls openly for violence against any coloured man daring to exercise

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the right of appearance at the polls which the U.S. Supreme Court has just ruled that he possesses.

Lynching, pogroms, vicious discrimination and violence against Negroes are on the increase* in general.

Openly self-styled fascist armed bands flourish (their prosecution for treason during the war collapsed in failure and has not been renewed). The Klu Klux Klan is ceremonially and gloriously revived. America's press and public men are in the lead in anti-Soviet incitement. These traits, taken together, comprise a physiognomy it is impossible to ignore.

What reigns now is a coalition of reactionary Republicans and Democrats, who together can control the legislature. Roosevelt's successor, Truman, has neither the burning desire, nor brilliant political strategy, which enabled his predecessor to circumvent it.

The two giant parties have no policies, no characteristic political faces, as have the parties of Europe. Each is an unprincipled melange—hardly even a bloc—extending from furthest right to furthest left. Each takes the utmost trouble at the Convention preceding election to adopt a programme (the Platform) which says absolutely nothing defiinite about any question of interest to the electorate whatsoever.

Historical and regional causes account for this. America is in extent continental. The greatest technological advancement in the world contrasts with a population which, according to the latest figures of the Administration's education authority, shows 10 per cent. adult illiteracy. Local interests keenly differ from other local interests, so that a national platform is driven to compromise. The cotton interests of the south, based on a slave-cropping harsher than slavery, remain extreme conservative whatever the programme. Of the historical parties, that becomes the rallying ground of the progressive forces which at the time is seeking to overthrow an administration that has exposed itself as reactionary. The country is too vast to offer any success sooner than ultimate to a third party, and meanwhile the more reactionary of the great ones would be offered certain triumph.

Roosevelt's mastery of the forces against him depended upon his superb sense as a political technician, his ability to manoeuvre and increase the pressure groups supporting a policy he favoured, so that he could achieve a strategic moment to outwit those that opposed it. A Truman is swayed by such forces. He does not ride the whirlwind.

The characteristic of American democracy is that the lobbies of the great monopolies are infinitely well-organised, unboundedly well-heeled. And against is a working-class movement not only divided industrially, but still unconvinced of the need for Socialism.

The great weakness of the progressive forces in America lies in the fact that the working-class has produced no mass Socialist Party. And, alongside, that liberal sentiment is distracted, rent, atomised and a good half of it misled into serving as accomplice to reaction by anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism.

These two circumstances are twin fruit of the same root, the privileges that American capitalism has been able to give skilled workers between crises in the past, based on its expanding home market and super-profits de-

* It is, indeed, a curious reflection that, while the "Anglo-Saxons" are sanctimoniously ranting of the peculiar values of their civilisation and the superiority of its moral standards over those of all others they (with addition solely of the Dutch) are the most active practitioners since Hitler went out of business of that product of diseased minds, fount of countless murders, racial discrimination.

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rived from an increasing hegemony of world trade.

Immense strides have been made in the political development of the U.S.A. in the past fifteen years. Before the first world war and for long after, effective industrial organisation was confined to the aristocracy of skilled labour (the A.F.L. and Brotherhoods). The unskilled, though they had fought battles and inspired songs and legends, remained largely outside. The advent of the C.I.O., joining skilled and unskilled of the latest and vital industries on an industrial basis, represents a new gigantic force facing the American employer, and not to be bought off. In its P.A.C., led by the late Hillman, which showed its power in the 1944 presidential campaign, American labour has come nearer than ever before to developing a mass political organ.

The problems, features and forces of the American scene remain as when Engels characterised them long ago:—

> The first great step of importance for every country newly entering into the movement is always the organisation of the workers as an independent political party. . . . The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and they can only have the opportunity when they have their own movement—no matter in what form so long as it is only *their own* movement—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn wisdom by hurting themselves. (Letters, 1886.) . . . but they are born conservatives—just *because* America is so purely bourgeois, so entirely without a feudal past and therefore proud of its purely bourgeois organisation—and so they will only get quit of the traditional mental rubbish by practical experience." (Letters, 1890.)

The great task of the world progressive movement is to find the way of allying itself with the greatest, yet most backward (backward in experience, grown backward in shelter) proletariat in the world.

Herein lies the real criminality of the Bevin alliance not even with Byrnes, but with the most reactionary wing of the Republican Party (still currently the more reactionary of the pair) expressed in Vandenberg. We see it most operated in this most vital field of all, in the opposition led by Noel-Baker (in imitation of Vandenberg and in disloyalty to the unanimous demand of the Trades Union Congress) to assigning a significant political role in the United Nations to the World Federation of Trade Unions (which includes the C.I.O.).

American Big Business understands its problems very well. It is equipped with a machine of productive capacity so great that it could find an adequate home market only by raising the share of the product received by the workers to such a point as is attainable only with the disappearance of Capitalism. To keep American capitalism going that vast machine must dominate the markets of the world. To stave off "economic recession" the development of all other nations must be arrested, their independence subordinated to the purchase of American products—a remedy that *can* only postpone, and not avert, the crisis.

This drive, of which Labour Britain is at present lined up the complacent and abetting prisoner, spells economic chaos, and war, within and far beyond the borders of the United States.

The only way to prevent such disaster is to build a firm solidarity of the world progressive movement, and its energising centre — world labour, around the Socialist principles—rejection of anti-Sovietism, colonial domination and leniency to fascist remnants—these are the touchstone of progress towards democracy and Socialism in this era. This solidarity is the path to aid speediest learning of its lessons by American labour (and by this means, not least, the path to provide, in the sphere of state relations, the firmest cement for three-power co-operation).

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Labour's duty in relation to America is to help American labour learn its necessary lessons, for Britain's and the world's future are dependent upon the speed with which it does so. Once more to recall Engels:—

. . . Once the first step beyond the bourgeois point of view has been taken things will move quickly, like everything in America. . . (Letters, 1890.) . . . this I consider certain: the purely bourgeois basis, with no pre-bourgeois swindle behind it, the corresponding colossal energy of the development, which manifests itself even in the mad exaggeration of the present protective tariff system* will one day bring about a change that will astound the whole world. Once the Americans get started it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children. (Letters, 1892.)

* Still true.

Book Review

The Causes of the German Catastrophe

The Growth of Modern Germany by Roy Pascal (Cobbett Press, Volume 2 of the Past and Present Series, pp. 150, 7s6*d*).

How could it happen? How could Germany, once regarded as one of the most civilised countries, sink into a state of debased, murderous, fanatical barbarism? How did she become a deadly menace to human civilisation? How was it that the democratic and peace-loving forces of the German people were so utterly routed, that the most reactionary classes won unchallenged power and could force millions of Germans to kill and to die for Hitler's glory and to continue a hopeless and senseless struggle even after irretrievable defeat ?

These are questions of fateful importance. For fascism and the threat of war have, unfortunately, not disappeared with the military defeat of Nazi Germany. But the moral and political extermination of fascism cannot be accomplished without a clear understanding of the roots and the essence of this deadly menace to peace, progress and the very existence of mankind.

Evidently the answer is not to be found in metaphysical theories about the German "spirit" or national character *à la* Vansittart.

The answer has to be found in history. Only a critical and objective study of Germany's economic, social, political and cultural development can answer the question: "Why did it happen there?" and so give an answer also to the further question: "What is to be done to prevent it happening again in Germany or in any other country?"

These political implications give a special value and importance to Professor Pascal's short historical outline. Tracing the main line of development from the end of the 18th century up to our days, Pascal gives a lucid analysis of the main forces which shaped German aggressive nationalism and imperialism and moulded the German people into a pliant tool in the hands of wild, reckless adventurers. These, however, could emerge as the leaders of the nation only because the ruling class of this country regarded war for world domination as the only way out of their crisis.

"The German character," Pascal says, "is as complex and malleable as that of any other people." It was first moulded into the shape of aggressive, conceited nationalism against other peoples, combined with submissive humility to their own over-lords by Prussian autocratic and militaristic despotism. While in Western countries the industrial middle class played the leading part in creating modern national states, the backwardness and weakness of the German middle class allowed Bismarck and the Prussian Junkers to assume leadership in creating and ruling the new Reich.

Pascal dates "the decisive turn of the German middle class towards the theory of aggressive nationalism" back to the revolution of 1848, when the great majority turned against the national aspirations of the Poles, Italians and Czechs. While this may be doubted—the year 1871, the foundation of the united German empire

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under Prussian leadership is mostly regarded as the turning point in the development of German imperialism—it is certainly true that in 1848 the German middle class, frightened by the first political appearance of the working-class, compromised meekly with feudal reaction and lost the chance of leadership in a truly popular democratic revolution.

In the Kaiser's Reich the bourgeoisie, while leaving the key positions of political power in the hands of the landed aristocracy, created the most powerful monopolies and backed whole-heartedly the armament race and the provocative, adventurous world-power policy of Wilhelm II.

The especially aggressive character of German imperialism is correctly explained by the fact that it came late, when the world was already shared out between the older capitalist powers. So there was a discrepancy between Germany's tremendous industrial, financial and military power and her comparatively modest share in colonial exploitation. Theories of German racial superiority, dating back far before Hitler, sought to justify not only colonial exploitation and the policy of brutal Germanisation against the Poles in Germany's eastern provinces, but also the right of the Germans to replace the "degenerate" Western nations.

After 1918, when Germany's social structure was not materially changed, while her international position became weaker than ever, nationalist resentment and ambition grew more dangerous than before. The world economic crisis of 1929 gave German imperialism a chance of winning the support of millions, ruined and desperate, who fell easy prey to Nazi propaganda. Thus Nazism has to be understood, not as "a mere outburst of eccentric fanaticism, but as the essential form of German imperialism, the only way in which German nationalism could satisfy its claims to power."

While the Nazis never won a majority of the people as long as any possibility of democratic expression was left, the easily won successes of Hitler on the field of international policy built up his tremendous prestige with the widest masses of the German people. In this connection Pascal correctly stresses the responsibility of the leading circles of the western powers who "permitted the rise of a gigantic German power in the hope and belief that it would be used solely against the Soviet Union."

But all this is only one side of the picture. The development of the middle class from liberalism to aggressive imperialism was more or less unavoidable under the circumstances. But where were the anti-imperialist forces? Why was the working-class unable to resist this march into disaster? This is the crucial question. Without the decline and degeneration of what was once admired as the first Marxist mass party, all this could not have happened.

Therefore we could have wished for a more careful and detailed analysis of the rise and decline and the internal struggle of the German labour movement. The fight between the revolutionary wing, inspired by the ideas of Marx and Engels, and the reformist wing which looked to the bourgeois state, even the semi-feudal Prussian monarchy, as an instrument of social reform, was the decisive feature from the beginning.

Pascal does not mention the Lassallean ideas which were so severely criticised by Marx and had such a fateful influence in shaping Social-democratic ideology. Marx and Engels denounced with all their vehemence the Lassallean tactics of trying to win the support of Bismarck against the liberal bourgeoisie. When they learned about Lassalle's secret negotiations with Bismarck, Engels wrote in a letter to Marx (January 27, 1865): "The worthy Lassalle is being gradually unmasked as just a common rogue after all." Schweitzer, Lassalle's successor, whose pro-Prussian policy was always criticised by Marx, later on was, in fact, convicted as a corrupted stooge of Bismarck.

It is carrying "objectivity" too far when Pascal refers to all this in one sentence: "Bismarck entered on direct and indirect negotiations with socialist leaders like Lassalle and Schweitzer, even with Marx." (p. 60).

Again we miss a clear analysis of the deep internal struggles in the Social-democratic Party which ended with the victory of the pro-imperialist right wing in 1914. It is correctly explained that the bureaucracy of the large workers' organisations

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had, more and more, grown into the system they were intended to overthrow. But no mention is made of the great theoretical and political struggle of the left wing, led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who long before 1914 fought against the infiltration of imperialist ideas into the socialist movement, propagated the example of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and advocated political mass strikes in the fight for a democratic franchise in Prussia. Nor is it correct that no one in the Parliamentary Party was bold enough to propose uncompromising opposition to the war in 1914. If no one else among the fourteen deputies who opposed the granting of war-credits, certainly Liebknecht stood for uncompromising opposition even if he bowed to party discipline at the first vote in the Reichstag.

The explanation both of the merits and of the weaknesses and mistakes of the revolutionary wing of the German working-class movement which formed the Communist Party in December, 1918, is as essential for an understanding of the German tragedy as a critical analysis of the catastrophic policy of subservience to German imperialism carried through by the Socialist right wing.

The only reliable democratic force in Germany is the Socialist working-class movement. Therefore all hope in a democratic regeneration of Germany depends on the re-emergence of a strong labour movement, implacably opposed to imperialism and chauvinism, but free from sectarianism and able to rally all the healthy elements of the nation for a programme of peaceful reconstruction. Without a return to the best traditions of the Marxist movement and without unrelenting and penetrating self-criticism this task will not be solved.

Numbers alone and efficient organisation, election victories and successes in social legislation, these are not enough to secure the leadership of the progressive forces in a great national crisis. There must be political unity, based on a clear-cut working-class policy which can inspire the widest masses to revolutionary action.

This is the grave lesson the German workers had to learn by bitter experience. The warning should be heeded in other countries, too.

Pascal's little book, by putting a great mass of relevant facts into a clear historical perspective, will be a great help to every student of the German problem. Let us hope that the author finds an opportunity to implement this useful work by a fuller and more adequate study of the history of the German working-class movement.

J. WINTERNITZ.

Publications Received

BOOKS

Economics and Politics (Communist Party of South Africa, 94 pp.).
New Foundations. A Book about Nationalism, Race Hatred and the Jewish Problem by Ernie Trory (Crabtree Press, 6*s*, 116 pp.).
A Century of American Life Insurance by Shepard B. Clough (Geoffrey Cumberlege O.U.P., 30*s*, 400 pp.).
1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals by L. B. Namier (O.U.P., 10*s*6*d*, 124 pp.).
Steel—The Facts by Henry Owen (Lawrence & Wishart, 4*s*, 136 pp.).
Commercial Policy in the Canadian Economy by Orville John McDiarmid (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 25*s*6*d*, 400 pp.).
Journey to Understanding by Percy Redfern (George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 10*s*6*d*, 219 pp.).

BOOKLETS

Public Health in the U.S.S.R. by N. Semashko (*Soviet News*, 1*s*, 48 pp.).
Quick or Dead by Gilbert Cope (Society of Socialist Clergy & Ministers, 1*s*, 19 pp.).

PAMPHLETS

Co-op Discussion Group Outlines No. 5: The Co-op Employee—His Place in the Movement by H. Afford (Education Committee, London Co-op Society, 6*d*, 15 pp.).
Christians and Foreign Affairs by Stanley G. Evans (Society of Socialist Clergy and Ministers, 3*d*, 14 pp.).
Transport by F. P. Antia (O.U.P., 9*d* (32 annas), 31 pp.).
Architecture by Claude Batley (O.U.P., 9*d* (32 annas), 32 pp.).
Communist Wage Policy and the Welsh Report by Sid Scott (New Zealand Communist Party, 3*d*, 12 pp.).
New Zealand Communism, 1946. A Manifesto of the New Zealand Communist Party, (6*d*, 32 pp.).
Poles Apart by Arthur Brady (Caledonian Books, Glasgow, 3*d*, 16 pp.).

PERIODICALS

Freedom (Communist Party of South Africa, 6*d*, 35 pp.).
Rumanian Review ("Europolis" Publishing Co., 4*s*6*d*, 111 pp.).

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American Anniversary Greetings

(Held over from July issue).

From: MORRIS CHILDS (*Editor*), DAILY WORKER, New York.

"The appreciation shown for the LABOUR MONTHLY in our country is proof that it has served the cause of Marxism very well indeed.

"The LABOUR MONTHLY has contributed to the theoretical and practical solution of many problems facing the international working-class movement in its struggle against imperialist oppression. Reactionary groups in our country and yours are driving toward a new world war to compel the world to submit to Anglo-American domination. A common understanding and co-operation of Marxists in the United States and Great Britain will cement the international solidarity of the working-class in its fight against reaction and war.

"As up to now, we count upon the LABOUR MONTHLY to do its part.

"In behalf of the Editorial Board and the entire staff and management, we send you salutations and fraternal greetings on this great and special occasion.

From: SCIENCE AND SOCIETY, New York City.

"The Editors of *Science and Society* congratulate LABOUR MONTHLY on its quarter century of service to the labour movements of the world. The information provided by your journal has been indispensable alike to students, to teachers and to participants in the struggles waged everywhere for the improvement of human conditions. It is increasingly recognised today that labour's problems and achievements are decisive for the future of all mankind. A Marxist journal like LABOUR MONTHLY gives direction while it informs. We wish you many years of widening influence and success."

From: POLITICAL AFFAIRS MAGAZINE, New York, U.S.A.

"For the past quarter century, the LABOUR MONTHLY has made major contributions to the cause of the British working-class in systematically spreading Marxist-Leninist enlightenment in its midst.

"At this moment, the offensive of reaction threatens to rob the peoples of the hard-won victory over fascism. Precisely today, full unity of the working-class and the common action of all peace-loving forces are imperative and sharp, struggle is necessary to defeat the drive of the Anglo-American imperialist bloc, which is directed at the Soviet Union, the new peoples' democracies of Europe and the colonial millions aspiring for freedom.

"U.S. imperialism is spearheading the Anglo-American imperialist drive. Across the Atlantic, fighting resolutely against the reactionary policies of our Hoovers and Vandenbergs, our Trumans and Byrneses, we express our solidarity with the struggle of the British workers for the cause of peace and progress.

"In particular, we send greetings to Comrade R. Palme Dutt, under whose editorship the LABOUR MONTHLY has fought and continues to fight for the working-class cause, for the interests of the people in Britain and the world."

From: PAUL ROBESON (*Chairman*), MAX YERGAN (*Executive Director*), ALPHAEUS HUNTON (*Educational Director*), COUNCIL ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS, INC., New York.

"This remarkable history of continuous service over a quarter of a century is itself the best evidence of the positive, constructive and consistent programme and policy which has characterised LABOUR MONTHLY.

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Amount received in July, 1946 : £49 : 2 : 5

AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW

Last month, in our 25th Anniversary Number, we appealed to our readers to make "a special and extra donation to what we might term our Reconstruction Fund." At the time of going to press, i.e., at the beginning of the third week in the month, the Fund Total, however, £49 2s. 5d., is the lowest it has been for some months. This may be due to the fact that the L.M. was unavoidably late in coming out last month—which always has a bearing on the response to the appeal—but it is never too late to swell next month's total!

Space forbids us quoting all the letters we have received from our readers on the occasion of our 25th Birthday, but there is one which we feel speaks far more eloquently than anything we could say. Yes, it is from a member of the Forces again—C.M.F.

"Enclosed are two postal orders as my second contribution to the LABOUR MONTHLY Guarantee Fund.

"Having a wife and child to provide for, I have had to consider carefully whether or not I could afford these contributions, and the inescapable conclusion is that I can't afford *not* to make them.

"May L.M. go on from strength to strength in the vanguard of the fight for the happiness and security of my family along with the families of the workers of all lands."

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